

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Springville Junior High School
165 South 700 East
Springville, Utah 84663**

April 12-13, 2006



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Springville Junior High School
165 South 700 East
Springville, UT 84663**

April 12-13, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
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Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	
State Board of Education	
School District Board of Education and Administration	
School Administration and Staff.....	
School Mission Statement and Beliefs.....	
Members of the Visiting Team	
Visiting Team Report.....	
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness.....	
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals.....	
Curriculum Development.....	
Quality Instructional Design	
Quality Assessment Systems	
Leadership for School Improvement.....	
Community Building.....	
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI.....	
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 12-13, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Springville Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Everett Kelepolo is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Springville Junior High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Springville Junior High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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Scott Wilson	Supervisor Secondary Education

SPRINGVILLE HUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Everett Kelepolo Principal
David Knudsen..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Monica Distefano Counselor
Kim Gerke..... Counselor
Linda Prior Counselor
D. Duane Rice..... School Psychologist

Support Staff

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Brenda Bales
Sue Bell
Shannon Burton
Alycesun Clare
Nan Davis

Cory Dixon
Karen Gochmour
JoAnn Grady
Toneta Holmes
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Megan Reese
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Mary Rice
Rich Richins
Steven Robbins
Paula Thatcher

Sam Tsugawa
Leslie Walker
Josh Weed
Natalie Weight

Brent Wood
Kaylinn Wright

SPRINGVILLE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

At Springville Junior High School, we are: Responsible Citizens,
Successful Learners, and Effective Communicators

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Students, teachers and staff have value and should be treated with respect.
- Personal integrity and respect for others contribute to a better society
- Education is a shared responsibility of the individual, parents, school and community.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Optimal learning takes place in a climate of love, caring, respect, trust, and appropriate expectations.
- A successful democracy is dependent upon an educated and responsible citizenry.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Andrew Odoardi, Cottonwood Youth Academy, Visiting Team Chairperson

Robin Keith, Dixie Middle School, Washington County School District

Georgia Loutensock, Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

Glen Westbroek, Orem Junior High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SPRINGVILLE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Springville Junior High School was originally built in 1912 next door to the high school erected in 1909 on 4th South and 1st-2nd East. The current building is located at 7th East between 1st and 3rd South being built in 1957. The building housed 7th-9th graders in the beginning and was adequate for their needs. Since then, the school has been added to, mascots changed several times, and outgrown. The district moved the 6th and 7th graders to a middle school. Today Springville Junior High School houses 1115, 8th and 9th graders. Two portables were added to the school last year. Next school year, 2006-2007, the school will return to a 7th-9th grade configuration with a much smaller population of only 850 as the boundaries changes will accommodate a new junior high as the middle school will be eliminated with 6th graders remain at the elementary schools.

Springville has a population of 26,000 and nearby Mapleton 6,000. The average yearly income is \$48,845 with an average family size of 3.8. Seventy eight percent of the homes are owner occupied. The major employers in the area are Nestle, Brigham Young University, Alpine School District and Utah Valley State College. The student population is by and large Caucasian with an ever increasing Hispanic population. 23.3% of student qualify for free and reduced lunch. Special Education is 7% of the school with the majority needing Language Arts services rather than math. The Intellectually Disabled and Emotionally Disabled unit is temporarily housed at Springville Junior High this year. Only 5% of the population has need for ESL. The school programs are extensive and diverse. The at-risk population is closely monitored and encouraged regularly by counselors, teachers, and administration. Courses offered are in line with standard curriculum guidelines on the state level. The average class size is 26 per class and there are 40 classes per period. Attendance averages at 93%. Consequences are given for tardies and sluffs. Rewards are given for attendance and good behavior.

On the Stanford Achievement Tests, Springville Junior High School's 8th graders scored 60th percentile and the 9th graders are at 63%. This is above the national average. The school changed to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in 2004, the scores have remained consistent and again, above the national average. The CRT's reflect the core curriculum content. Springville Junior High School has a reading proficiency program using Reading 180 and Achievement Plus to help struggling students. Students and Parents feel that the education offered at Springville Junior High School is of high quality.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of their profile?*

The school offers many diverse programs that all can choose to participate and

grow in. High achievement is supported by a strong attendance policy of 93.4% as well as incentives. Opinion surveys reveal a majority of parents and students (84.2%) feel Springville Junior High School offers a high quality education especially in the arts. They also feel that the school is making good use of technology to enhance student learning. Students experience a significant increase in reading ability while at Springville Junior High School.

The school identified a large disparity between the Criterion Reference Test Scores of English Language Learners and Special Education Students compared with the whole school. There are some concerns with regards to safe school environment and low CTR scores in some subjects.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Since the school will be in a 7th-9th grade model next year, modifications to the school profile will need to include addition data collection and analysis. With a loss of a portion of the current population, a re-analysis of the community demographics and surveys may need to be completed.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends an in-depth analysis of UPASS data be completed by each department. This process will improve and foster assessment driven instruction.
- The Visiting Team encourages the math department to disaggregate the CRT data by course as there appears to be a discrepancy in the correlation of this data and their evidence in the department analysis. (See pages 49, 50 and 109 of the school profile.)
- The Visiting Team appreciates the collaboration done to this point for the accreditation process. The Visiting Team advises continuing collaboration between departments to enhance student learning.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

According to the report and the visiting team meetings with parents, students and teachers, all the teachers and administrators were involved in the self-study to

some degree. Focus groups were identified as well as sub-committees for the purposes of organizing, conducting and developing the self-study. The focus group leaders provided direction and guidance to the process. Each group had interdepartmental representation as well as parents and students. In addition, each department met to identify how it linked its efforts to the desired results for student learning and to cite areas of strength and weaknesses. Series of regular meetings were held with parents and students for input into the development of the desired results for student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The staff recognizes their strengths as effective educators, and yet, most of the staff is willing to endorse the concept of continuous improvement on behalf of their students. As the school becomes increasingly knowledgeable about using the self-study process to accurately identify student achievement gaps, reflect on current educational practices, and examine organizational practice, they will become more effective at identifying both their strengths and limitations.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Springville Junior High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

- Effective Communicator
- Responsible Citizen
- Successful Learner

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The visiting team evidenced significant collaboration with the community in both affirming and contributing to the future direction of the school.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements clearly reflect the commitment of the school to support student achievement and success. The reiteration and attention to the belief statements are commendable. The commitment to the desired results for student learning offers a clearly defined focus on the quality of the school's culture and ideals in support of student learning.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

Throughout the narrative of the departmental analysis and the narrative of the focus groups there is clear evidence of attention to the issue of alignment of curriculum, instruction, and the DRSLs with the mission and belief statements and in the action plans.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

After visiting various staff members, the leadership team, and department heads, it is evident that the collaborative efforts toward student improvement are based on the Utah Core Curriculum and they are working together to clearly define standards that support both the Utah Core and their selected DRSL's.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There is significant evidence that the staff and administration have developed a culture of collaboration and inquiry that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning. The staff has split into teams to focus on various areas relating to student learning. They have also begun the process of curriculum mapping.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Instructional methods in many classrooms demonstrate a commitment to meeting a wide variety of learning styles.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

To meet the needs of a variety of instructional strategies, the Visiting Team recommends that each staff member join their state and national professional organizations or associations.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Applying knowledge obtained from the professional materials will provide more researched-based strategies for best practice.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The school has identified data from the CRT's and other standardized testing that can be disaggregated to help meet the needs of individual students.

The Visiting Team discerned that the school uses a variety of assessment/testing strategies which are articulated to focus on the quality of student learning, including observations, group work, examples of student work, as well as traditional paper and pencil assessments, project based products and portfolios. School wide assessments were limited to standardized state and national tests, and rubric for 6-Traits writing process. The departments indicate a sincere effort in citing how they address the desired results for student learning, but now need to develop ways to assess how students meet the indicators and standards for each desired result for student learning.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The state CRTs have been developed using performing standards based on best practice. Springville Junior High School has developed an action plan to allow them to identify students' performance based on their DRSLs developed thru the collaboration process..

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Visiting Team, in discussions with teachers, students, and counselors, found that assessments of student learning and grading practices are fair. The performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are established and shared with students in advance of the assessment and are consistently applied on an equitable basis.

The Visiting Team believes that authentic assessment is the strongest indicator of knowledge. Springville Junior High School has implemented a true authentic assessment in their journalism class. Students write and submit weekly articles to the local newspaper which are then read and selected for publication. This exercise has improved the quality of student writing and provided a source of material for the newspaper.

The Fine Arts Department has also been showcased as a true assessment tool. They have won over the community in their performances and extra-curricular activities. The Science Department thru the use of their annual science fair, allows students to demonstrate understanding of the scientific method. Many Springville Junior High School students are invited to showcase their projects at the Central Utah Science and Engineering Fair. The Service Learning Class compliments the learning of all students thru serving their school and community and applying their knowledge as they work.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is evidence that the leadership team has made strong efforts to promote quality instruction and that the administration fosters an academic learning climate. They actively support teaching and learning by creating a dynamic action plan that involves faculty and leadership collaboration on a regular basis. The school is divided in to focus groups and departments and there is many opportunities for cross curriculum programs that improve student learning in areas of writing, service, and critical thinking.

- b) *To what extent does leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The administration and faculty have shown that they have done research concerning their students. They have taken the data and have collaborated concerning what the results show. They have incorporated many of these results into their action plan in a collaborative way.

- c) *To what extent does leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

There is some evidence that the administration monitors test and other data that displays student achievement. They are working on processes to evaluate instructional effectiveness. Over the next several years they will create a

comprehensive assessment program to examine results of student learning.

- d) *To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The administration has divided their responsibilities to more effectively manage the school. They have a district wide safe schools program and a zero-tolerance "bully" program. As a community they have a close relationship between school, police, courts, and parents. It was evident that the school was a safe place to receive an education and the students were engaged in learning in an efficient and effective learning environment.

- e) *To what extent does the leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The school leadership team has created plans and followed through with the implementation of various improvement programs, including 6-Traits, curriculum mapping, and some staff development training.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leaders have made a strong effort to include the school community in its responsibility for student learning. They have a good community council that has reflected on the desired results for student learning. Activities of the school are shown on a local channel each day and they have created a web site to share their goals and efforts in student improvement.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Many programs are offered to foster a feeling of support and caring among all teachers, staff and administration. The school community has really come on board and is excited about and involved with the new DRSLs. Teachers expressed a positive change has been noted because of implementation of the DRSLs.

Springville Junior High has put into place a number of activities that foster working relationships within the school. In monthly faculty meeting there is a "By George" activity where individual staff members honor each other. Each

month a teacher is recognized for “Excellence in Education.” The Visiting Team was impressed with the collegiality and camaraderie of the staff. For the last several years Springville Junior High has had several interns and student teachers. Monthly mentor meetings are held to aid and support teacher interns and new faculty members.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

In the self-study it is stated “there seem to be a lack of networks for the support of student learning outside of the school.” The self-study also noted a need for more involvement with local government, clergy, youth serving agencies and community members.

The school has some collaboration with the community. The journalism class has been writing articles of local interest and submitting them to the local weekly newspaper, the Springville Herald. Several student articles have been published in the newspaper. The Fine Arts program is supported and appreciated by the school patrons and the community at large. There is a faculty advisor in place to direct and supervise Service Learning Program which involves the community outside the school.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

There is a general feeling of encouragement to ongoing professional support. Results of a survey of the faculty revealed that most members were unsure if improvement was being made. However, the faculty feels improvement is necessary. The survey outcomes noted the majority of the participants surveyed seemed unsure of the school’s goals and whether or not they are being met. The focus group “surmised that this meant our current climate or culture is not impressive and therefore needs improvement.”

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The focus group survey reflected that teachers, parents and students felt there was a need to improve conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement.

The focus group reported, “Some teachers feel that conditions exist that support productive change and continuous improvement, but the same number of teachers

felt the opposite.” The survey indicated that “improvement was indicated to be most needed in the areas of discipline and collaboration.”

Teachers are given professional development opportunities through the district on an on-going basis. Springville Junior High School has implemented programs to meet the behavioral problems. For example, the enforcement of the tardy policy with the Morning Enrichment Program has greatly reduced the number of students loitering in the halls.

The focus group report suggests several ideas for improvement of behavior that should be considered for future study and possible implementation, i.e., sharing of new ideas from workshops, developing direct consequences for problem behavior, emergency beepers for teachers, and peer court.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high /middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, only by USOE – it is their choice to join or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plans clearly address the critical areas for follow up. The action plans address the major concerns identified by the staff and reflected in the profile data. They effectively identify critical areas for improvement. The entire staff is encouraged to focus its efforts on those areas articulated in the action plans that will directly impact student learning and student achievement.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The majority of the school participated in the process of developing the action plan. The community was involved in this process and a general feeling of commitment exists. The administration is very positive as well as realistic in their evaluation of how committed their faculty is to the process and the completion of the action plans. It was evident to the visiting team that the leadership team, administration as well as many of the teaching staff shares a strong commitment

to the action plans. The administration acknowledges that total buy-in to the process will take time and commitment on their part.

- c. *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The follow up processes are generally sound. More attention needs to be given to indicators of improvement or movement toward the desired results for student learning. The school has set dates for accomplishing their action plans. The plans need to be more specific in indicating responsibility and how progress will be communicated to the school community.. In order to monitor school improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership needs to identify what data/evidence should be collected and periodically/incrementally analyzed by the team. The visiting team suggests incremental benchmarks and analyses about how the data from the findings impact instructional strategies, instructional delivery, and curriculum content.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The visiting team is impressed with the cleanliness of the building, the welcoming atmosphere, and the posting of the school wide rules in every room and in the halls.
- The student body is polite and respectful and proud of their learning.
- Teachers are risk-takers, willing to start new programs
- Writing is used across the curriculum.
- The staff is provided multiple opportunities to participate in workshops which extend their learning. Staff is fully involved in their own life-long learning and sharing that with the students.
- This is a wonderful school. The kids are friendly and feel safe. The teachers care about their students and go any length to help them develop. Responsibility is evident on both sides of the board. Students are given greater responsibility to do their work on time with good quality. The staff feels supported by administration and happy to work here.

- The staff is to be commended on a sincere effort to conduct a candid self- study of their school and to use this process to identify improvement efforts on behalf of the students and parents they serve.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for their conscious and diligent efforts in creating a positive culture and climate conducive to teaching and learning.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for continued efforts in identifying the needs of students, and in creating a positive community image for Springville Junior High School. This image includes; providing a safe learning environment, holding high expectations for student learning and a staff characterized by caring educators willing to do whatever is necessary to help students succeed.
- The faculty learned much about themselves in the accreditation process and see the need for further study to improve the learning environment
- The administration is to be commended on their support of the staff and their willingness to share the leadership of the school with the stakeholders.

Recommendations:

The Visiting Team are in substantial agreement with the myriad of recommendations that come out of the departmental and focus group analyses and the goals of the action plans. They are indicative of the high quality of the self-study effort and the integrity of the processes in working to develop the school improvement plans. Our hope is to provide some focus for the schools improvement processes and link them to attainable results by virtue of the following recommendations.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan include a timeline of long and short-term goals with realistic goals, benchmarks, and dates for implementation and completion. Specific persons responsible for the goal achievement should be noted. The action plan ought to be reviewed and revised as needed to reflect the results of continuous data collection and analysis by the departments and focus groups. The action plan should also include a professional development component that would address “best practices,” research and data driven strategies.
- In acknowledging the degree of progress made, and work already in progress, and the quality of the recommendations from the Focus Group and departmental reports, The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty collectively study best practices and research in the teaching and assessing of the school’s DRSLs, and identify indicators and establish the standards for students’ demonstration of the DRSLs. Each department should develop a means of evaluating student work

relative to the DRSLs in order to determine whether or not students become more effective communicators and better critical thinkers, writers, and citizens.

- The Visiting Team recommends development of the opportunity for teachers to collaborate, sharing best practices and implementing the school's action plan. The school needs to engage the whole staff in collaborative inquiry with regard to the DRSLs.
- The Visiting Team encourages building on the collaborative possibilities that come from the use of the 6-Trait writing program and Read 180 and the descriptions of indicators and assessments for the DRSLs to conduct horizontal and vertical curriculum mapping and teaming. This will be increasingly important as the school incorporates the incoming seventh grade.